

REVIEWS AND APPROVALS

MASON NECK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Lorton, Virginia

MARUMSCO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
FEATHERSTONE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Woodbridge, Virginia

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Calendar Year 1983

Thomas W. Stewart 4/2/85
Refuge Manager Date

Edward L. Mace 5/23/85
Refuge Supervisor Review Date

T. M. Andrews
Regional Office Approval

6/4/85
Date

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INTRODUCTION

The Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge is located in Virginia, 18 miles south of Washington, D.C. Nestled on an 8,000 acre boot-shaped peninsula jutting out into the Potomac River, the refuge is dominated by mixed hardwood/evergreen forests, high bluffs, and about 300 acres of freshwater marshes. From the initial acquisition of 845 acres in 1969, Mason Neck has grown to 1,920 acres, including 789 acres leased in 1982 from the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Three private inholdings totalling 355 acres remain.

The refuge was established in 1969 as the Nation's first bald eagle refuge using funds provided under the Endangered Species Act. Eagles have nested and wintered on the peninsula since before the 1700's. Currently, only one nest, located on the leased land, is active and an average of ten eagles use the refuge each winter.

Though located within easy driving distance for approximately 10 million residents of Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., the refuge has an annual visitation of under 10,000 people. This is due to limited public use facilities and competition from over 400 nearby Federal, state, regional, county and city parks.

Until 1974, Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge was a subunit of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. It then became an independent unit with a manager and two subunits of its own, Featherstone National Wildlife Refuge and Marumsco National Wildlife Refuge totalling 164 and 63 acres respectively.

A. HIGHLIGHTS

Three million dollars for acquisition of the last three inholdings on the refuge were included in the House and Senate FY 83 Supplementary Appropriations Bill. (Section C.1.)

A pair of bald eagles produced one eaglet, the first baby on the refuge since 1979. (Section G.2.)

The refuge received its first waterfowl banding quota in March. It was for 100 black ducks. (Section G.3.)

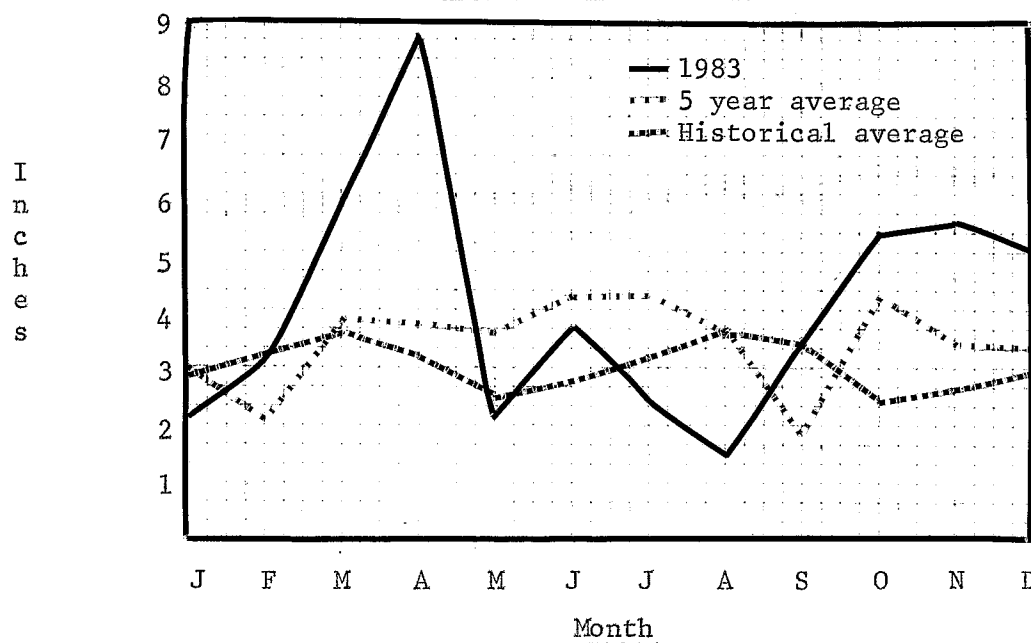
Headquarters was relocated from Lorton about 5 miles from the refuge to Woodbridge, 8 miles from the refuge. Leasing for both sites was handled by GSA. (Section I.8.)

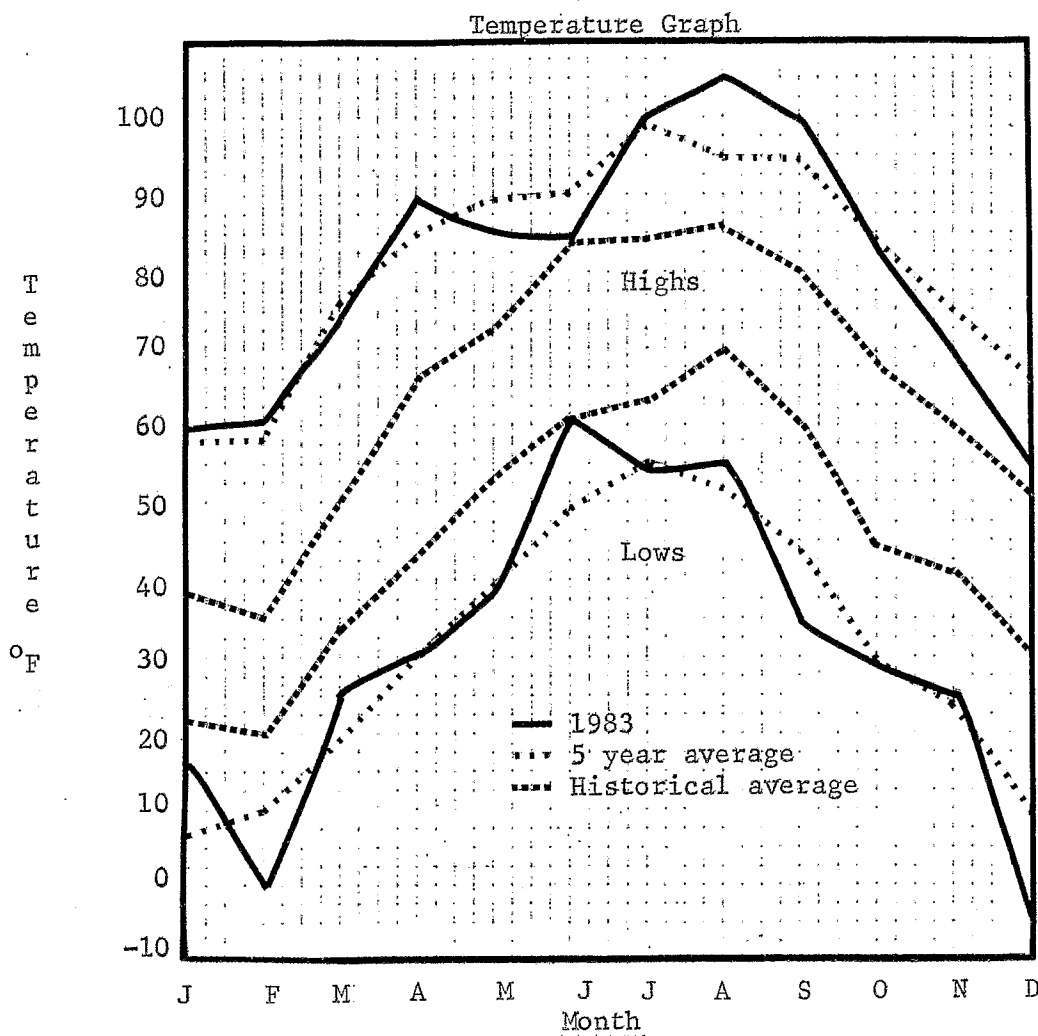
B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Mason Neck's weather is characterized by hot, humid summers and moderately cool, moist winters. Snow accumulation is usually low and covers the ground for less than a week at a time.

During 1983, there were 19 days of measureable precipitation equalling 48.6 inches of rainfall. Most of the rain fell on weekends and during the spring, fields were too wet for the farmers to plow. The greatest snowfall (30 inches) since 1979 fell in February and was reminiscent of the big snowstorms of 1969 and 1973. Extremes in temperature were 105°F in August and -4°F in December.

Precipitation Graph





C. LAND ACQUISITION

1. Fee Title

No land was acquired this year but efforts are continuing to purchase the last three inholdings totalling 355 acres. Three million dollars for acquisition were included in both the House and Senate FY 83 Supplemental Appropriations Bill.

3. Other

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to administer 789 acres leased from the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. The two parcels involved are adjacent to the refuge and contain the only active bald eagle nest on the Mason Neck peninsula and a large great blue heron rookery.

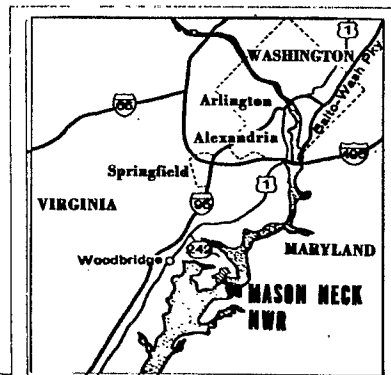
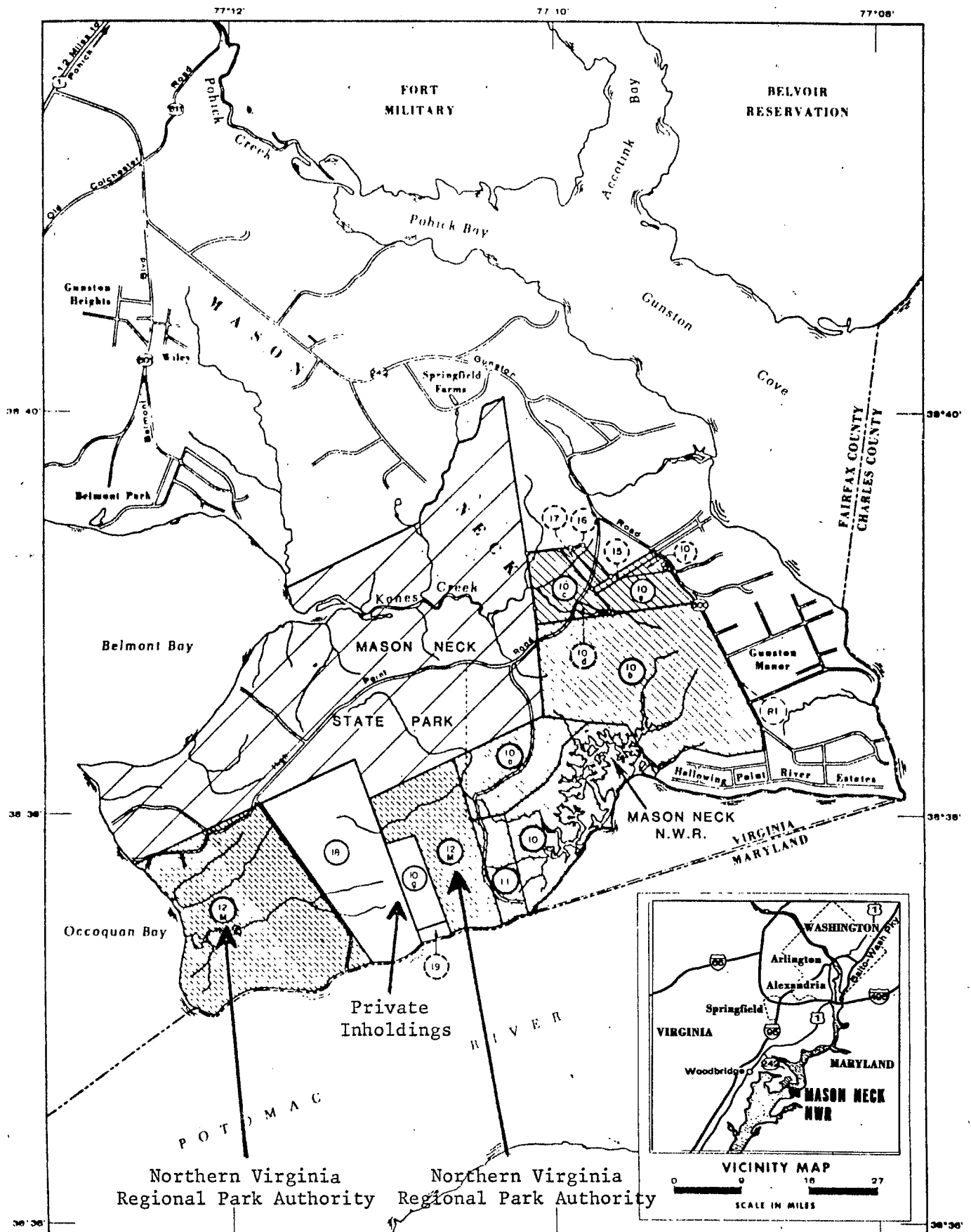
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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



VICINITY MAP
SCALE IN MILES
0 10 20

COMPILED IN THE DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
FROM SURVEYS BY G.S. AND S.F.A.W.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
POSTED 12/78

JULY 1974

0 2000 4000 6000 8000 Feet
0 600 1200 1800 2400 Meters

7°
Z
Magnetic
True North
MEAN
DECLINATION
1971

D. PLANNING5. Research and InvestigationsMason Neck NR83 - "Bald Eagle Study" (51610-1)

George Mason University graduate student Susan L. Haines continued her study of the distribution and behavior of bald eagles on the Mason Neck peninsula. She began her work in January of 1981 as a direct result of the formal Section 7 consultation with the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service regarding development of the Mason Neck State Park. Although it was determined that the Park's planned Phase I development would not severely impact the eagles, concern over future development led to a recommendation for a study of this type.

The main objective of the research is to determine current eagle use of the area and how it is affected by the Park development and resultant human activities. Information obtained from this study would be used in future consultations over any subsequent development.

Mason Neck NR83 - "Box Turtle Home Range Telemetry Study" (51610-2)

Another George Mason University graduate student, Jonathan W. Bayless, has been studying movements, home ranges and territorial interactions of the box turtle since April of 1981. Radio telemetry and thread trailers are used to monitor the daily movements of the reptiles.

This study is funded by a grant from the University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory.

Mason Neck NR83 - "Comparative Basking Behavior of *Chrysemys picta picta* and *Pseudemys rubriventris rubriventris*" (51610-3)

Jeffrey Lovich of George Mason University began observations in April of 1982 of basking aggression in turtles. He is studying both intra and inter-specific aggression between painted and red-bellied turtles.

Mason Neck NR83 - "The Ecology of Nest Site Selection in Freshwater Turtles" (51610-4)

Steven Gotte, also of George Mason University, commenced a study of factors influencing turtle nest site selection. Preliminary results gathered in 1982 were somewhat disappointing,

since all of the 150 nests located had been predated. However, rather than indicating an overabundance of predators, Gotte feels the findings show his technique for locating undisturbed nests needs improvement.

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

This station finally acquired a maintenance position although it is only a temporary part-time position. John Weller was chosen and started November 28. Even though he only works 4 days a week, his presence is making a big difference in the condition of refuge equipment. He has also improved our ability to monitor the refuge. With most of the staff tied to the office, John is usually the only one who can check the refuge on a daily basis.

The refuge also exchanged outdoor recreation planners as Marian Johnson Pohlman transferred to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in May and Yvonne Schultz transferred in from Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in October.

A summary of refuge staffing over the past 5 years is shown below.

Table 1.

	<u>Permanent</u> <u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Seasonal</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Temporary</u>
FY 84	3			1
FY 83	3			
FY 82	2	1		
FY 81	2	1		1
FY 80	2	1		1

Staff Listing for 1983

Domenick R. Ciccone, Refuge Manager, GS-11, PFT
 Marian M. Pohlman, Outdoor Recreation Planner, GS-9,
 Transferred 5/29/83, PFT
 Yvonne M. Schultz, Outdoor Recreation Planner, GS-9, EOD 10/31/83,
 PFT
 Barbara Mitchell, Secretary, GS-5, EOD 12/14/80, PFT
 John Weller, Maintenance Worker, WG-6, EOD 11/28/83



YCC Staff

8/83 DRC

Jeffrey Stein, Group Leader
Richard Potvin
Robert Roth
Jennifer Smith, assisted Group Leader
Timothy Spence
Kristine Houser
Sara Junkin
Linda Ladenburg
Brenda Starr
Katherine Oliver
Stuart Doggett
Rodney North

2. Youth Programs

Mason Neck's 1983 YCC Program consisted of a 10 enrollee, 8 week, non-residential camp. Because of the increase in the size of the program from the previous year, the first for a YCC camp at Mason Neck, recruitment efforts were intensified. Five-hundred applications were distributed to high schools, youth organizations, employment offices, and interested individuals. News releases were submitted to four newspapers and two radio stations, and notices were posted in public places such as libraries. As a result, 117 applications were received from residents of three counties.

One group leader was selected from 12 applicants and a summer employee, Jennifer Smith, was hired to assist with the supervision of the enrollees. In addition, a student volunteer was used periodically to supervise work projects and provide environmental awareness training. Refuge personnel also supervised enrollees directly on a number of occasions.

Noteworthy work projects completed include construction of a new photography blind, rehabilitation of the Woodmarsh Trail, construction of waterfowl banding traps, and removal of old buildings and structures.



#2 A new photoblind was the 1983 camp's monument project.

7/83 DRC



#3 YCC installed new trail sign.

8/83 DRC



#4 YCC's refurbish bike rack at Woodmarsh Trail.

8/83 DRC

Environmental awareness training consisted primarily of knowledge gained during work projects such as deer population censusing, a forest resources inventory and a study of bald eagle roosting habitat.

We were unable to reach our goal of 3,200 enrollee work hours due to absenteeism. Although all enrollees were given the option of continuing work after the 8 weeks ended, only two were interested. Total enrollee work hours were 3,081.

This year's YCC program was a success in terms of benefits to both refuge and enrollees. One change which would improve the program in the future would be to reduce the enrollee to group leader ratio, enabling us to host a smaller camp.



#5 Saying goodbye and thanks.

8/83 DRC

4. Volunteer Programs

Most volunteer work is accomplished by friends or relatives of staff who are aware of manpower shortages and step in when needed. Two exceptions this year were Lee Pollitt and Mike Drummond. Lee is a former employee whose appointment could not be extended but she continues to return and monitor the bluebird nest boxes. Mike Drummond is a student at Ferrum College whose curriculum requires students to intern or do 400 hours of volunteer service in their field of study. Lee and Mike both provided vital man-hours and expertise to Mason Neck.



#6 Volunteer Mike Drummond working on a forest study.
8/83 DRC

5. Funding

The funding situation in FY 83 and FY 84 was much improved over previous years, largely because of available Accelerated Refuge Maintenance Management (ARMM) monies. This should permit Mason Neck to complete many badly needed maintenance projects.

The following table depicts the status of refuge funding over the last six fiscal years and the current fiscal year.

Table 3.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Source</u>
1984	124,000:*	
	113,800	1260
	10,200	1520
1983	84,000:	
	32,000	1210 (MB)
	2,000	1220 (MNB)
	46,000	1240 (I&R)
	4,000	1400 (SE)
1982	75,000:**	
	30,000	1210 (MB)
	1,000	1220 (MNB)
	40,000	1240 (I&R)
	4,000	1400 (SE)
1981	71,000:	
	22,000	1210 (MB)
	1,000	1220 (MNB)
	44,000	1240 (I&R)
	4,000	1400 (SE)
1980	70,851:	
	24,000	1210 (MB)
	42,000	1240 (I&R)
	4,000	1400 (SE)
	851	1911 (ECE)
1979	116,480:	
	22,000	1210 (MB)
	43,000	1240 (I&R)
	3,000	1400 (SE)
	48,480	BLHP

*Reduced from \$149,360

**Reduced from \$82,000

6. Safety

The station broke its 3-year run of no personal injuries this year when YCC enrollees received minor injuries in two incidents. The first involved an enrollee being hit by a shingle thrown by another enrollee in horseplay, and an enrollee being struck by a shovel she had knocked off a rack. Both incidents required only minor first aid and resulted in lectures to the whole crew about proper behavior and safety.

Refuge staff also managed the difficult feat of running our only truck into our only car on a blind corner on the refuge. No one was hurt but we did prove that in a contest between a Chevy pickup and Ford Escort, the Escort does not stand a chance.

Safety meetings were conducted monthly with staff from Mason Neck State Park frequently in attendance.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

1. General

Located along the Potomac River, 18 miles south of Washington, D.C., the refuge covers 1,920 acres, a portion of which (789 acres) is managed under lease. About 80 percent of this land is hardwood forest on gently rolling terrain which culminates in steep (up to 50 feet) bluffs along the Potomac.

2. Wetlands

The 285 acre freshwater tidal Great Marsh is the largest marsh in Fairfax County, accounting for nearly one-third of the County's remaining wetlands.

There are no man-made impoundments on the refuge, so the only areas not subject to the tidal fluctuation of the Potomac River are three beaver ponds covering about 75 acres. Their impoundments are much appreciated during droughts and storms.

3. Forests

Mason Neck is dominated by oak/hickory forests with a few small patches of pine where houses and farm fields were abandoned during acquisition.

No active management took place during 1983.

5. Grasslands

The refuge maintained two meadows totalling 15 acres. Mowing to maintain habitat diversity has been a problem with only a small Kubota tractor for this type of work.

G. WILDLIFE

1. Wildlife Diversity

Despite its location within a large metropolitan area, the refuge has retained much of the wildlife diversity present during colonial times. Over 300 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians are found on the refuge.



#7 Snapping turtle laying eggs.

2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

Mason Neck was set aside in 1969 as the first refuge established specifically for the bald eagle. Since colonial times, eagles have lived and nested on the peninsula. An historic summer roost used to be located just off the north end of the Great Marsh on the first land acquired for the refuge. A currently active winter roost is only yards away from the north boundary on state park property and eagles nest regularly on land leased from the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

Though we only peaked at 11 eagles using the refuge, down from the last 2 years, 1983 was still considered a big success. One eaglet was fledged, the first since 1979. This bird was banded on May 21 by

National Wildlife Federation personnel assisted by refuge staff. Also, during the Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey there were 76 sightings of eagles. This was narrowed down to at least 10 individuals.



#8 Who invited you?

5/83 Craig Koppie
NWF



#9 Despite his arguments, junior did
receive a leg band.

5/83

Craig Koppie
NWF

3. Waterfowl

Waterfowl during 1983 tallied 144,360 use days of which 138,660 (96 percent) were for ducks. Mallards (39 percent) followed by black ducks (16 percent), wood ducks (13 percent), ruddy ducks (7 percent), and mergansers (7 percent) were the predominant species.

The abundance of mallards and black ducks resulted in the station being given its first banding quota of black ducks and mallards. Blackwater loaned us a cannon net but problems with ice and tidal action resulted in only two mallards being caught.

4. Marsh and Water Birds

Great blue herons were the dominant marsh bird logging 112,500 use days. The rookery, censused in June, had 198 nests. Approximately 317 young were produced and the population peaked around 650 birds.

For the first time, another species was noticed to share the rookery when a common egret nest was located. Another first was the observation of two white ibis on the refuge.

5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns, and Allied Species

Gulls make up the bulk of use by this group. Predominant shorebirds frequenting the Great Marsh and Potomac shoreline are greater yellowlegs and spotted sandpiper.

6. Raptors

More than 10 species of raptors use the refuge with red-tailed hawks being the most numerous. Most are believed to nest on the refuge but nesting sites have not yet been identified.

7. Other Migratory Birds

The annual Christmas Bird Count netted 66 species which was down 25 percent from 1982.

8. Game Mammals

White-tailed deer and raccoon are the predominant species followed by muskrat and beaver. River otter and gray fox are also putting in more appearances indicating their populations are on the rise.

16. Marking and Banding

As mentioned earlier in the narrative, staff were involved in banding one baby eagle and received our first duck banding quota of black ducks and mallards. Only two mallards were banded.



#10 Secretary Mitchell and volunteer Earl Hodnett hold the first 2 ducks banded at Mason Neck.

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

Refuge visitation appears to be on the rise again after a drop in 1982. Visitor facilities are limited to one foot trail accessed via a small dirt road and only the more serious bird watcher or student is willing to traverse the road and trail. In turn, they are rewarded with a peaceful hike undisturbed by crowds.

There are no buildings on the refuge accessible to the public and limited staffing has restricted contact between the Service and the general public to displays along the trail, several brochures, and specially scheduled on (in fair weather) and off-site programs.



#11 The only time the trail got crowded was when the
birders were migrating through. MJP

Table 2.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Visitation</u>	
	<u>General Visitation</u>	<u>Environmental Education</u>
1979	8,975	427
1980	5,279	502
1981	6,966	2,482
1982	4,689	1,342
1983	5,271	721

Data preceding 1980 calculated via formula, after, by electronic counter.

2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students

As evidenced by Table 3, environmental education has for several years made up a large percentage of the station's annual visitation. Sites adjacent to the main trail and only accessible via prearrangement are reserved to show students older hardwood forests, young pine forests, early and late succession fields, marsh, and river habitats while separating their studies and impact from the regular visitor seeking solitude and wildlife.

The program has great potential but has suffered certain setbacks in recent years. Twice, momentum built up through promotion and staff working closely with groups was lost when the ORP position remained vacant during important seasons, once from September through December in 1980 and again from May through October in 1983. Another setback came in 1982 when Fairfax County refused to permit its school buses to travel refuge roads because of their condition. This is reflected in Table 4.

Table 4.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>												<u>Total</u>
	<u>J</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	
1979	0	0	0	0	110	116	0	0	25	140	10	0	401
1980	0	0	16	107	198	66	26	24	0*	30	0	0	467
1981	0	0	94	187	187	601	381	157	6	290	302	0	2,205
1982**	0	0	50	218	166	279	41	83	0	115	26	34	1,012
1983	0	0	0	297	225	0*	0	0	0	47	90	14	673

*Start of period ORP position vacant.

**Fairfax County refused school bus service to refuge.

Refuge closed to general public, December through March.

3. Outdoor Classrooms - Teachers

Teachers have been very interested in the refuge but, without easy access for their classes or an ORP nearby to bail them out when a student asks questions, are hesitant about visiting or using the refuge. There are also over 200 local, regional, and state parks nearby competing for their attention. Staff have had to work hard to encourage use through workshops and trade-offs where an employee frequently gives a program at the school to prepare the class for the field trip.

Teacher-oriented activity is shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>												<u>Total</u>
	<u>J</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	
1979	0	0	0	1	6	14	0	0	3	0	2	0	26
1980	0	0	0	0	14	14	3	4	0	0	0	0	35
1981	0	0	5	34	8	65	28	67	18	20	32	0	277
1982	0	0	4	24	32	39	7	90	94	21	7	12	330
1983	0	0	0	28	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48

4. Interpretive Foot Trails

Mason Neck has one 3 mile long self-guided trail, the Woodmarsh Trail, through forest and marsh habitats. A brochure available at the beginning of the trail explains 18 numbered sites along the way and helps orient visitors as they traverse the trail.

Efforts to maintain the trail in as natural a state as possible leaves it narrow, twisting, climbing, and descending in many points but all the more enjoyable for its natural variety. Improvements include spreading gravel or woodchips in areas subject to erosion, installing a total of five footbridges over low spots, lining the trail with logs to guide visitors at confusing points, and providing a few wooden benches as resting points. The trail is not accessible to even service vehicles and all materials must be carried in by hand or wheelbarrow. Alternate trails are being planned to provide handicapped accessibility.

This year, 2,565 visitors toured the trail guided by the brochure with 20 percent or 510 using it just during the month of April. Use rapidly tapered off as the heat and humidity brought out the insect population and visitors were kept moving by enthusiastic mosquitoes.

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

The refuge maintains two displays along the Woodmarsh Trail consisting of a truncated pyramid shape showing marsh residents on each of its four sides and a six-paneled display shed showing a map of the trail and explaining about eagles and other species using the refuge.

For off site use the refuge maintains a System 70 with panels that can be varied depending on the occasion and two small dioramas showing pond life purchased from a science supply house. These exhibits were displayed 11 times at schools, libraries, and the Fairfax County Festival.



#12 Manager Ciccone manning the display at the Fairfax County Festival. 6/83

7. Other Interpretive Programs

Because most schools in the area are extremely limited in field trip funding and we are trying to stimulate interest in the refuge, we provide some programs at the schools. This also occurs when a trip is rained out since the refuge has no facilities for inclement weather.

The refuge also continues to present programs at local nursing homes when time permits and the Prince William County Juvenile Detention Center. Forty-two off-site programs were given this year.

11. Wildlife Observation

Thirty-seven percent of refuge visitation or 1,935 individuals were involved in general wildlife observation along the Woodmarsh Trail. Most have previously toured the trail using the brochure and are returning to view the marsh or beaver activity.

12. Other Wildlife Oriented Activity

Sixteen percent of this year's visitation was in some way involved in photography. So far, use of the photoblind constructed by the YCC during the summer is still light, but the blind is new and we have not had much of a chance to advertise its existence. A permit (no charge) is required so that only one person or group is there at any one time, and to provide vehicle access since the blind is located in a closed area of the refuge.

17. Law Enforcement

Until Yvonne Schultz arrived at the end of October, Manager Ciccone was the only staff member with law enforcement authority on the refuge. He patrolled periodically with local and state authorities and in December assisted a state trooper with the arrest of two spotlighters along the north boundary of the refuge, one of which was a convicted felon.

Manager Ciccone and ORP Schultz did some boat patrol of the area during waterfowl season and apprehended two hunters who had come ashore on the refuge because "that's where the ducks were."

Five box traps were removed from the Great Marsh but the owner was never apprehended. They appeared to have been set for raccoon.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

2. Rehabilitation

The YCC was instrumental in removing one dilapidated boat house along the Potomac River near the Great Marsh which had been a target for vandalism and made several repairs to the old garage that acted as their headquarters.

Gravel was spread on the poorer sections of Sycamore Road.

The state started work rehabilitating High Point Road which serves both the refuge and Mason Neck State Park. Their two lane chip-and-seal road seems like a highway compared to the previous dirt road where you found potholes in the potholes.



#13 The state's new road was a tremendous improvement over the old pothole-ridden single lane access road.

8. Other

GSA decided not to renew the lease at the plaza in Lorton where the office was located. Space was found in Woodbridge on the second floor of a shopping center roughly 8 miles from the refuge and 4 miles further away than the previous location.

J. OTHER ITEMS

3. Items of Interest

February 17	Martha Tacha and Milt McCarthy of Ecological Services visited the refuge.
February 22	Jocelyn Buck on staff with the House of Representatives and James Gillett, Division of Refuge Management toured the refuge.
March 2	Refuge Supervisor-South Ed Moses visited the refuge.
March 31	The Friends of Mason Neck held an organizational meeting which was followed by a tour of the refuge on April 2.

April 12 Assistant Regional Director Suzanne Mayer toured the
 refuge.
April 19 Refuge Manager Ciccone taught one session of the local
 community college's Wildlife Management class.
June 6-7 George Gavutis and Cindy Uptegraft conducted a program
 evaluation on the refuge.
December 16 Deputy Regional Director William Ashe visited and
 helped Manager Ciccone give Kathryn Skinner and
 Dan Ashe, both staff for the House of Representatives,
 a tour of the refuge.

4. Credits

ORP Schultz wrote the report and Secretary Mitchell typed it. Assembly
and photography was a joint effort.

K. FEEDBACK

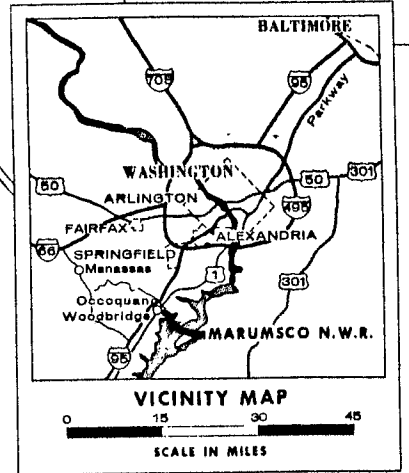
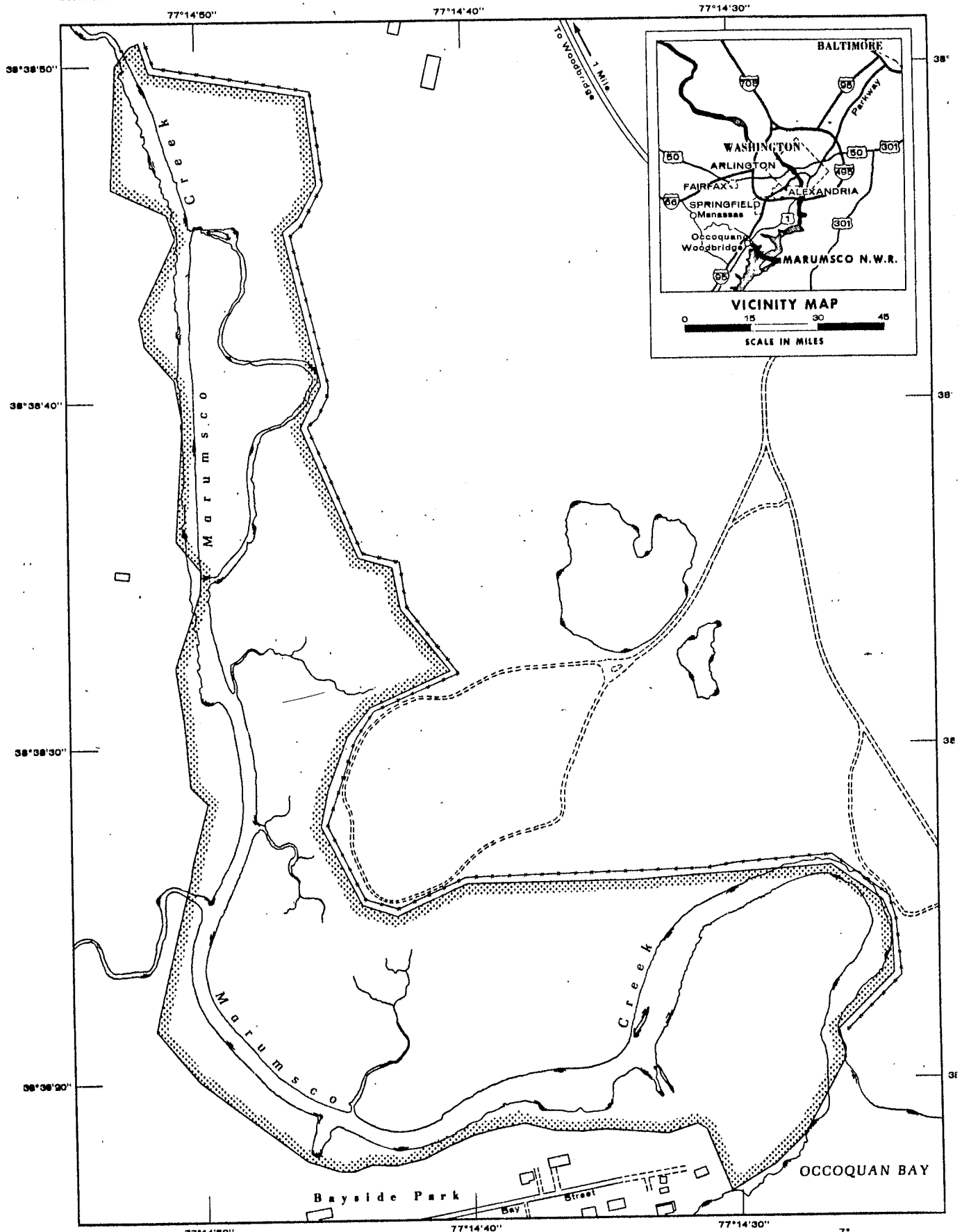
Rather than harp about the burden of excess paperwork, I will save us all
some time and say goodbye to 1983. Time to go on to the next report.

MARUMSCO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

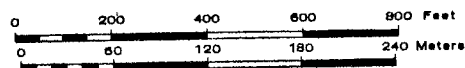
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

UNITED STATES
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



COMPILED IN THE DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
FROM SURVEYS BY G.S. AND B.S.F. & W.



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS FEBRUARY 1974



MEAN
DECLINATION
1971

MARUMSCO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Woodbridge, Virginia

Marumsko National Wildlife Refuge consists of 63 acres of freshwater tidal marsh located along Marumsko Creek near its conjunction with Occoquan Bay. It was established in 1973 from lands declared excess by the U.S. Army and is administered by the Mason Neck staff.

No management activity takes place on Marumsko and, in fact, the refuge is visited rather infrequently. However, Secretary Mitchell's residence abuts this area and she is therefore able to maintain a watchful eye over it.

The refuge is used by small numbers of feeding and resting waterfowl and marsh birds. Mallards, black ducks, mergansers, and great blue herons predominate.

Red-tailed hawks and osprey were also seen resting in the area with bald eagles believed to occasionally visit from Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge which is less than 3 miles away.

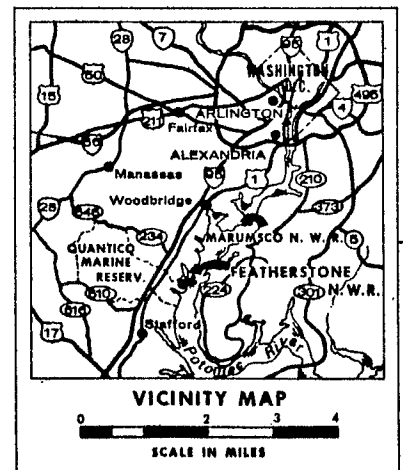
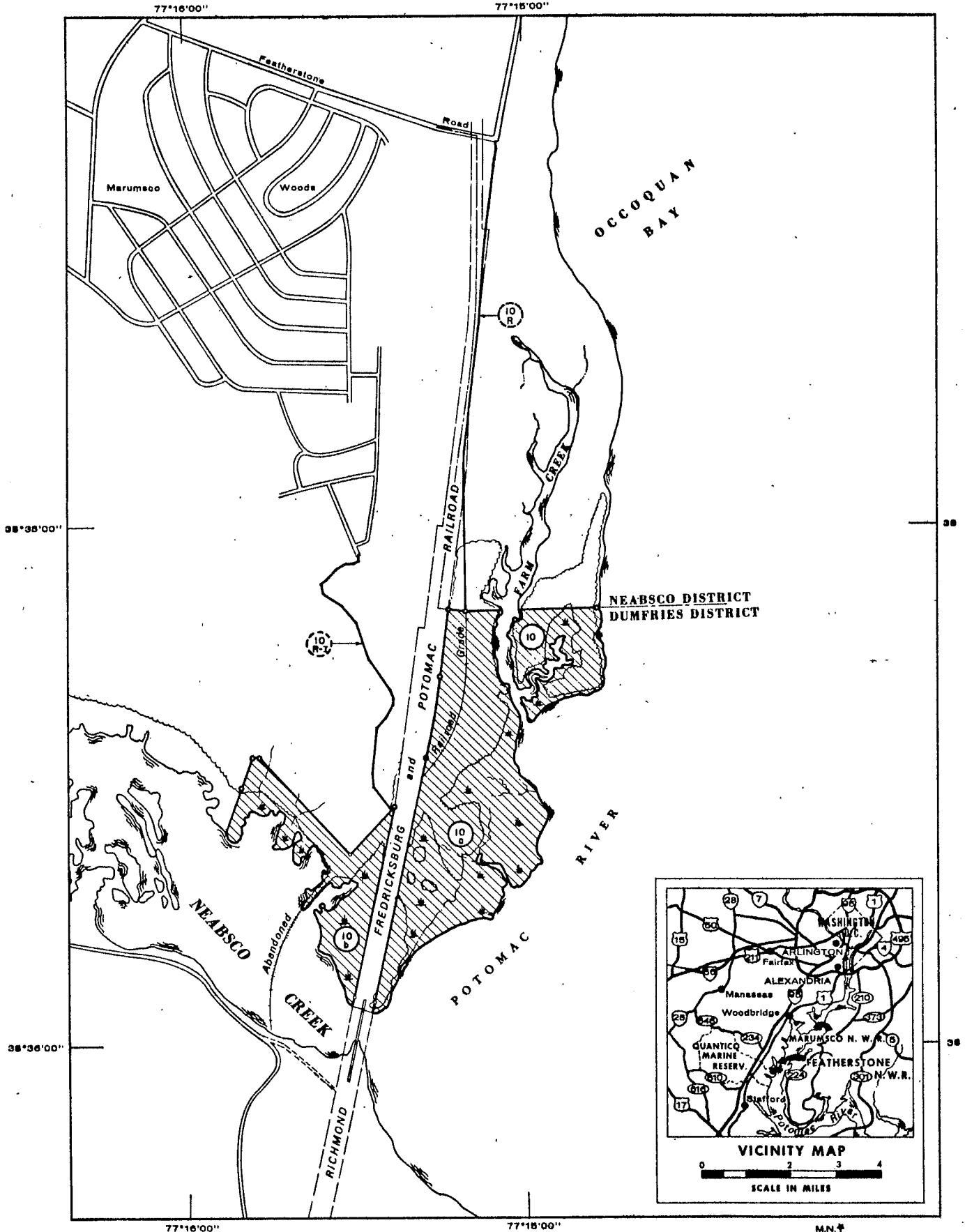
Two classes led by personnel from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation took canoe tours of Marumsko.

FEATHERSTONE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



FEATHERSTONE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Woodbridge, Virginia

Featherstone National Wildlife Refuge is located in Prince William County, Virginia, approximately 2 miles south of Mason Neck headquarters, out of which it is administered. The 164 acres of woodland and freshwater tidal marsh along the Occoquan Bay and Neabsco Creek were acquired in 1979 from the District of Columbia.

Difficult access to this refuge, along with manpower deficiencies, unfortunately result in fewer staff visits than could be desired. No management activities took place on Featherstone during 1983.

Very little accurate information is available on wildlife populations using this refuge. Waterfowl such as mallards, black ducks and wood ducks are known to frequent the marsh areas and some production is suspected. Bald eagles, osprey and other raptors are occasionally seen flying over the refuge. Great blue heron are seen in the marshes and along the bay shore throughout the year. Muskrat, beaver and deer are known to be present.

No public use is permitted on Featherstone, although a considerable amount of unauthorized activity does occur. The refuge has received reports of some illegal hunting but has been unable to confirm or deny these reports due to poor accessibility and limited staff time. Refuge staff, state wardens, and the closest special agent checked the area during waterfowl season. They found no active signs of violations.